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II. (*Astron. Nach.*, No. 475, 476). In this paper he pointed out some anomalies in the intensity of the comet's light similar to what have been observed from time to time in other comets.

Plantamour was a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the Institute of France, having been elected as successor to the elder Struve. He was also a Corresponding Member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Turin, and an Associate of the Royal Astronomical Society of London. He was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of this Academy on March 13, 1878.

### FRIEDRICH WÖHLER.

FRIEDRICH WÖHLER, after a long manhood full of the fruits of well-directed intellectual labor, after a tranquil, honored, happy old age, died on the 23d of September last, surrounded by a loving family, and in the full possession of his faculties. He was born on the 31st of July, 1800, in the village of Eschenheim, near Frankfort-on-the-Main. He entered the Gymnasium in Frankfort in his fourteenth year, and there his boyish fondness for experiment quickly ripened into a strongly marked taste for chemistry and mineralogy, for the study of both of which sciences he had accidental facilities which influenced his whole after life. At the age of twenty he entered the University of Marburg, where he passed a year, and where, in a small extemporized private laboratory, he began the study of the compounds of cyanogen, his first paper on that subject appearing in Gilbert's *Annalen*, in 1821. From Marburg he went to Heidelberg, and there worked in the laboratory of Leopold Gmelin, whose influence upon him was very marked, and who quickly perceived in him the promise of future eminence. Here he published two papers on cyanic acid. He had at this time the prospect of becoming a physician, and took his degree as Doctor of Medicine in September, 1823. The urgency of Gmelin decided him to devote himself exclusively to chemistry, and, after a brief correspondence and warm recommendation from Gmelin, Berzelius agreed to receive him into his laboratory. The charming account which he wrote in his old age of Berzelius himself, of his own residence and travels in Sweden and Norway, and of various distinguished men whom he met, is familiar to all chemists. Wöhler spent nearly a year in Sweden, forming a friendship with Berzelius which was never interrupted, and which ended only with the life of the latter. He at first settled in Heidelberg as Privatdocent, but by the advice of Berzelius, Gmelin, and Von Buch, in 1825 went to Berlin. and there became

teacher of chemistry and mineralogy in an industrial school founded by Von Bärensprung. While in Berlin he succeeded in isolating aluminum by the action of sodium upon aluminic chloride, and published papers upon various other subjects. In 1828, while still in Berlin, he made his memorable discovery of the synthesis of urea. We who are familiar with the artificial preparation of alizarin, of indigo-blue, and of citric and uric acids, and who can see the shadow of the coming syntheses of chinin and morphine, find it perhaps difficult to understand the influence of Wöhler's discovery in the year 1828. But, as the first synthesis of an organic body from the elements, it marks the beginning of an era in the history of chemistry.

In 1831 Wöhler removed from Berlin to Cassel, where his wife's family resided, and where he obtained a professor's chair in the Gewerbschule. Before this, however, his lifelong friendship with Liebig had been formed, and when, in 1832, his young wife died, Wöhler sought for a time a congenial home with Liebig in Giessen. There the two produced their noble study of the oil of bitter almonds, — an investigation received with a general burst of admiration, and which roused even the calm nature of Berzelius to enthusiasm. In 1836 Wöhler succeeded Stromeier at Göttingen, and was succeeded at Cassel by Bunsen. Then came the grand work with Liebig on uric acid. To this succeeded a long series of papers, partly in conjunction with Liebig, partly his own exclusively. The complete list of Wöhler's writings includes two hundred and seventy-five titles. There is no department of chemistry not enriched by his labors. Many of his papers are very short, but every one is at least suggestive. Every method in analytical chemistry which he gave admitted of generalization. Nearly all the rarer elements passed through his hands, and perhaps no chemist ever had so wide an experience.

Wöhler had a mind fertile in methods, and a judgment seldom at fault. His character was singularly well balanced, and an inborn, keen sense of humor kept his whole nature sweet and wholesome. His pupils were warmly attached to him. They celebrated his sixtieth and seventieth birthdays, and the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of the synthesis of urea. But on his eightieth birthday chemists of all lands united to honor the grand old man. Contributions poured in from all quarters, and not last or least from our own country. A beautiful marble medallion in a frame of bronze was the form which the memorial assumed, and which, worthily bestowed, was accepted with a few dignified and touching words. In 1880 the old chemist published his last paper, — a brief notice of a galvanic element containing alumi-

num. The decline of his long life had all that makes old age endurable,—the society of family friends and pupils, freedom from sickness or serious infirmity, a reasonable competence, and an honest, well-earned consciousness of a life full of usefulness and without stain.

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Since the last Report, the Academy has received an accession of eighteen new members; viz. nine Resident Fellows, one Associate Fellow, and eight Foreign Honorary Members. One member has resigned, and another has abandoned his fellowship. The list of the Academy corrected to the date of this Report is hereto added. It includes one hundred and ninety-four Resident Fellows, ninety Associate Fellows, and seventy-two Foreign Honorary Members.